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ABSTRACT

A group of 10 men and women representing Africa, Asia, the South Pacific, the Caribbean, Europe, Latin America, and North America met in Nairobi, Kenya, in October 1986 to form a training network. During the conference, the 10 representatives met together and in small groups to (1) identify and discuss some of the training programs that are available to adult educators in general and to grassroots practitioners and popular educators in particular; (2) explore ways of validating the role, knowledge, and skills of community-based popular and grassroots adult education practitioners; and (3) discuss and suggest strategies for identifying, documenting, and sharing the experiences of innovative participatory training programs. The participants developed a framework to examine these themes. From discussion emerged ideas about the ideological base/political dimension of adult education, the training of adult educators, institution building, and the new network. A mission statement, guiding principles, list of tasks, and structure for the new network were established, and plans were made to help the network grow in the future. (KC)

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Introduction

In Macau, in February 1985, the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), in cooperation with the Asia South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPAE), oraganized an international workshop on the Training and Accreditation of Adult Educators.

The recommendations of the Macau Workshop were discussed extensively by the Working Group on Training during their deliberations at the ICAE World Assembly on Adult Education, held in Buenos Aries, Argentina, November 24-30, 1985.

The working group acknowledged and reiterated ICAE's role in advocating, promoting and supporting training programs in the different regions, and put forward the following recommendations:

- that a network for the Training of Adult Educators be set up as a new network of the International Council for Adult Education; and

- that all regional associations be encouraged to established regional networks of interested individuals, members of community-based, grassroots organizations and institutions to contribute to the work of the international training network.

The Program Advisory Committee of ICAE, at its meeting in early 1986, responded to these recommendations by proposing that a small number of representatives from the various regions meet in Nairobi in late 1986 to discuss and establish a network that would focus on and address the training of adult educators.

The Nairobi Meeting

The meeting was hosted by the African Association for Literacy and Adult Education, and took place in Nairobi from 29 September to 03 October 1986. It provided a forum for a small group of experienced adult educators from different parts of the world, to work on the following agenda:

- to identify and discuss some of the training programs that are available to adult educators in general, and to grassroots practitioners and popular educators in particular;
- to explore ways of validating the role, knowledge and skills of community-based popular and grassroots adult education practitioners;
- to discuss and suggest strategies for identifying, documenting, and sharing the experiences of innovative participatory training programs.

OBJECTIVES

The overall objective was to develop the philosophy, principles and operation of an ICAE training network. The specific objectives were to establish a network that could:

- provide adult educators with opportunities to share the richness of their local practice, and,
- facilitate provision of and access to quality training programs for adult education; and
- to create the infra-structure, and put in place mechanisms for the operation and functioning of the training network.

PARTICIPANTS

The ten women and men represented Africa (3), Asia, the South Pacific, the Caribbean, Europe, Latin America and North America. The representative from the Arab region was unable to attend due to a state of emergency in Lebanon. Of the ten participants, one had taken part in the Macau Workshop on Training and Accreditation, and several had been members of the Working Group on Training during the Buenos Aires World Assembly. Two participants had been selected by their regional associations, and others had been identified and invited by ICAE. However, during the Nairobi meeting everyone agreed that in future the regional associations should have the final say about who should represent each region on the training network.

The participants combined a wealth of experienced in developing, providing, and conducting formal and non-formal training for adult educators at various levels, from practitioners at the grassroots level, and popular educators, to adult educators at the university graduate level.

Om Shrivastava is deeply involved in organizing and conducting participatory training workshops and programs for marginalized groups and grassroots educators in India. Jorge Osorio, who works in the training centre of the Latin American Regional Council of Adult Education in Chile, is involved in the training of popular educators in Latin America. Evelyn Murialdo has had considerable experience in 'mother tongue' literacy and community-based literacy in Toronto, Canada. Fatima Ndiaye of Senegal works with rural women's non-formal education programs.

Juma Nyirenda in Zambia, Chris Duke in the United Kingdom, and Phyllis Cunningham in the United States, are all engaged in developing and teaching adult education programs at the university level. Pat Ellis (Barbados) and Akanisi Lewaravu (Fiji) were completing graduate research work on the training needs of adult educators in the Caribbean and the South Pacific, respectively. Paul Wangoola is engaged in the task of developing a comprehensive program and network for the African Association for Literacy and Adult Education that would include English-, French-, and Portugese-speaking regions.

Though the participants were a small group, it became obvious that their experiences reflected both the commonalities and diversities that exist within and between the various regions of the world. All agreed on the importance of acknowledging, and trying to understand, the different social, cultural and political contexts within which adult educators work in various parts of the world, and that this awareness must be the starting point for both regional and international networks.

Another important starting point was the concern of the participants for, and commitment to, improving the type, quality and quantity of training available to adult educators, and to increasing the number and variety of training opportunities for practitioners.

METHODOLOGY

From the outset, we all agreed that the way in which we worked should reflect our common belief in a methodology that ensures the full participation of each person in the process of learning. Collectively, we agreed on an agenda that facilitated the sharing of ideas and that stimulated creative thinking. We recognized that if each of us was to participate fully, the languages used throughout the meeting would be a crucial factor. Since not everyone spoke English, we agreed to conduct the meeting in English, French and Spanish, with translations back and forth among these languages.

Now we were faced with the reality of our earlier agreement to respect the differences of each other's culture and language. In practice, it proved to be more difficult to tolerate these differences. This was especially true when a great deal of time had to be taken, not only in translating back and forth in three languages, but in ensuring that concepts and issues were being interpreted and understood in the same way.

As the meeting progressed, however, we began to realize that the somewhat tedious and frustrating pauses for translation was adding a new dynamic to the entire workshop process. When we reflected on this dynamic at the end of the workshop, we recognized what a worthwhile investment the translation process had been and how we had benefited from it. For instance, we had to really listen to each other, and we had to be clear and precise in saying what we meant. At the same time, the pauses while translations were going on gave us both opportunity and time to analyze, reflect and re-assess what we had said.

This experience not only enriched the quality of our discussion and interaction, but enhanced our learning about ourselves, each other, and what we were discussing. More than that, it resulted in the development and strengthening of a strong emotional bond between us, and contributed to our excitement, enthusiasm and commitment to a shared vision for the new network.

The Way We Worked

For the most part, we worked as a single group; but on occasion smaller groups worked to synthesize and summarize the day's discussions on key issues. For instance, small groups put together the first draft of the mission statement, the guiding principles, and the network tasks. These were then refined by the entire group. On another occasion, after we had discussed the issue of accreditation and the outcomes of the Macau meeting at great length, a small group prepared a short statement on accreditation (included in this report).

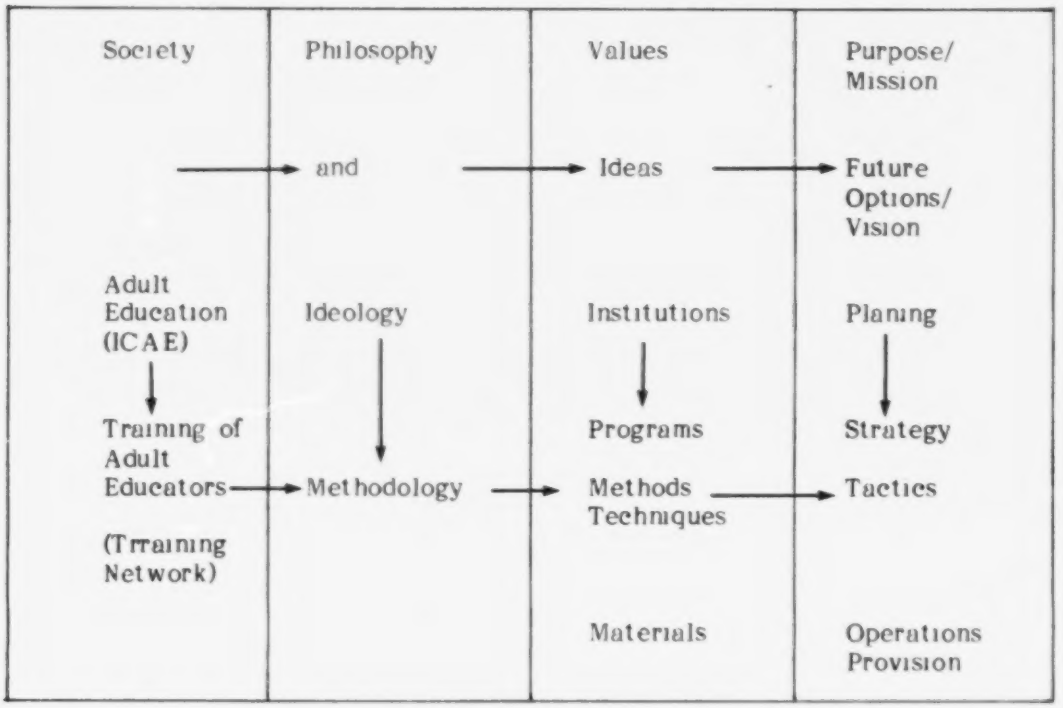
Because we agreed to practice what we preached, and to adopt an approach that would acknowledge and value each person's experience in the field of training, we took as our starting point our own experiences as trainers, and the situation of training in our various regions.

Process and Outcomes

Each of us described our practical experiences of training rural women, farmers and landless labourers; of training trainers and facilitators; and of training within formal institutions and popular training centres. Each of us then identified and described some of the different types of training programs available to adult educators in the regions from which we had come. We shared information about the objectives of some of these programs, about the training activities undertaken, the problems faced, their successes, and some projections for the future of the programs.

Given the size of the regions represented, the diversity within each region, and the absence of a comprehensive data base on training in adult education, the information presented by each participant was not only selective and highly subjective, but also represented only a partial picture of what exists. As we realized how difficult it was even to know about our own regions, we recognized the complexity of the task which the new network would have to undertake.

From the individual presentations we identified key issues that highlighted some of the main needs and concerns of adult education in various regions, and of the training to which they have access. We then categorized the issues according to broad themes and discussed and analyzed these within an agreed upon framework (see diagram below).



This framework helped us to identify and examine the forces and factors that would influence the way in which an international training network might function.

THEMES AND ISSUES

As we identified and attempted to group the large numbers of issues which has surfaced in the regional presentations, several major themes emerged. These are grouped below under Idelogy and Political Base, Training of Adult Educators Institution Building, and the new Network.

1. The Ideological Base/Political Dimension of Adult Education

- The nature of society and the role of adult education in the development of society
- The importance of understanding the context within which adult education and training takes place

- A model of alternative development that puts people at the centre
- The growth of the adult education movement and its links to other social and political movements
- Ideology and its relation to the process of education
- Adult education as empowerment.

II. Training of Adult Educators

- Absence of a comprehensive data base
- Availability and provision of training
- Types of training: formal, informal
- Concept of training - training as courses or training as continuing education
- Target groups: professional adult educators, grassroots practitioners, popular educators, trainers
- Small number of trained adult educators in all regions
- Local vs overseas training - promotion of local training, reciprocal exchange between South and North, South/North crossover, South - South
- Training programs: approaches, content, methodology
- Systematization, documentation and sharing of local practices and experiences in training
- Training institutions: opening up traditional institutions to create space for alternative modes of training
- Accreditation: definition, certification, recognition of local training programs, local requirements, and legitimization and validation of programs.

III. Institution Building

- Strengthening local and regional institutions
- Building networks, regional and international
- Inter-agency cooperation

- Role of regional organizations
- Role of International Council for Adult Education

IV. The New Network

- Philosophy, principles, values, context
- Tasks - focus of the work, local practices
- Structure - establishment of regional networks
- Functioning - coordination, funding strategies.

DEFINING THE SCOPE OF THE NETWORK

From our intense discussion, analysis and reflections on these themes and issues, we concluded that the network should attempt to influence the practice of a wide spectrum of adult educators: grassroots and popular educators in developing countries, as well as adult educators involved in skills development and retraining for employment in technologically advanced and industrialized countries.

We agreed that, in addition to being clear on the 'mission' of the network, we must articulate clearly the philosophy, ideology and guiding principles that would inform the work and direction of the network. We were unanimous in our belief that the concept of participatory learning must be central to the philosophy and values of the network. This includes the idea of people taking responsibility for their learning, and being active in defining and facilitating their own learning and their development.

Only when we had dealt with these fundamental issues did we begin to explore how the network might function if it is to address the more specific issues and concerns identified from the regional presentations, and if it is to meet the needs of the wide spectrum of adult educators. In addressing this question, we constantly reminded ourselves of the diversity within and between regions, of the need to respect local adult education and training practices, and of the importance of understanding the social context within which adult education and training takes place.

Consequently, we decided that 'regionalism' should be the core of the network, and that both its structure and the tasks it undertakes should be determined by and reflect regional diversity. Therefore, we devised a structure we felt would ensure that the base of the network would be rooted in the regions, and that the network would operate in a highly decentralized and participatory manner, similar to the way in which we worked throughout the meeting.

NAMING THE NETWORK

Because we all had become more sensitive to the issue of language, we spent considerable time talking about the name of the network. We felt strongly that the name should reflect the values and principles on which the network was based. We agreed that training had undesirable connotations and did not adequately express or communicate the idea of participatory learning which was central to the philosophy of the network.

After lengthy discussions, we agreed to adopt the French term FORMATION and to use 'participatory' as the operative adjective. We realized that participatory formation would sound strange at first and might bother some people, however, we felt that our meeting offered a good opportunity for an attempt to change and redefine terminology. We decided that the network would be called The Network for Participatory 'FORMATION' of Adult Educators.

PRACTICAL CONCERNS

The group then turned to practical aspects of how the Network would function, starting with the identification of specific activities. We wanted to ensure that the tasks and activities we identified would really address the issues and concerns that come up in the regional presentations during the workshop.

The next was the issue of coordination of the Network. It was finally agreed that an International Coordinator be appointed for two years from October 1986. We agreed that this person should be a woman from the South. For these reasons, the group recommended that Dr. Pat Ellis become the coordinator.

This recommendation was included in a short statement to the Executive Meeting of ICAE in Sri Lanka, in October 1986. The statement,which laid out the guiding principles, network structure and task, was presented by the Coordinator, with assistance from ICAE's Network Support Coordinator.

EVALUATION

During the evaluation process each person reflected on the emotional and learning processes he or she had experienced during the meeting, and highlighted some of the things each had learned. This exercise showed that all of us had learned to be a little more tolerant of, and have a greater respect for, the differences between us.

The Network

Statement of Mission

The Network for Participatory 'FORMATION' of Adult Educators, as a network of the International Council for Adult Education, takes its mission and purpose from the Council which it serves. These include recognition of the ideological base of adult education:

- that adult education cannot by its nature be apolitical (whether or not its policicality is recognized);
- that it should be committed to people's issues and related to their social movements for a just and humane society; and
- that it must respect and value cultural—including racial and linguistic—diversity and the different local experiences and realities of people in all parts of the world.

This implies faith in people and a voice for people, especially the most marginalized and dispossessed, to be able to take control of their own education and their own destinies.

The membership of ICAE represents a wide spectrum of adult education activities, from popular education to technical training and professional updating for employment. The Network for Participatory FORMATION of Adult Educators seeks to support and influence the training of adult educators in all spheres of ICAE work, and to facilitate exchange of experiences between different areas of the work.

Guiding Principles

1. Respect for the local experience and practice in adult education and a recognition of the socio-economic-cultural context within which the training of adult educators takes place.

2. Identification, promotion and support of, regional training initiatives, support for existing training centres and encouragement for the development of new training centres at local, national and regional levels.

3. Facilitation of the sharing of experiences and of a process of mutual learning between:

   * South/South
   * South/North
   * North/North

The above includes recognition of the increasing 'crossover' between South and North; for example: the needs of the poor and oppressed, formerly seen as concerns of the South, are now seen as important issues for the North. Adult education for leisure and for retirement, and adult education for protection of the environment, once considered of concern only for the North, are now becoming areas of serious concern for countries of the South. This reciprocity encompasses the idea of drawing knowledge and skills from the South for use in the North.

Network Tasks

1. Distribution of a Newsletter to network members twice a year, in Chinese, English, French and Spanish in order to share the work of the network between the different regions with specific view to facilitate exchange of personnel and the sharing of good practice.

2. Establishment of an information base, through regional directories, for exchange of personnel, according to their particular skills, expertise levels and areas of interest.

3. Promotion of the development and strengthening of local and national centres for participatory 'FORMATION' of adult educators by:

   - identifying and assessing initiatives already taken by ICAE;
   - identifying the kind of support needed in the regions;
   - o advising the ICAE Executive to attract the necessary resources to support the work of the network.

4. Study how the training from the North for adult educators in the South affects the development and strengthening of local and national centres for FORMATION and research by:

   - o summarizing and disseminating the fundings of the study "Adult Educators from Africa: Issues in Training" throughout the network;
   - o commissioning other studies from different parts of the South on the issue of training from the North for adult educators in the South; and
   - o organizing an international workshop/seminars for a dialogue between non-governmental organizations and international funding agencies, and ensuring the participation of key decision makers in discussing the issues.

5. Collection and dissemination of analytical case studies of participatory non-formal programs for FORMATION of adult educators.

6. Collection of information about the political dimesion of adult education and promoting its inclusion in the programs of FORMATION of adult educators.

7. Promotion of more understanding and awareness between policy makers and adult educators, through regional meetings and other ways, of the values on which the network operates.

8. Together with the regional associations develop strategies for accreditation that meet local needs.

Network Structure

1. The international network will be made up of regional networks.

2. The regional networks may comprise individuals and organizations. They have a specific responsibility for institution-building.

3. The regional coordinators will link the network for Participatory FORMATION of Adult Educators with that of the regional associations. Where regional associations do not exist, individuals may be identified to build the network in their regions.

4. The regional coordinators will also participate in organizing regional training networks They will develop regional mailing lists that will be added to the mailing lists of other regions and form the network's mailing list.

5. The regional coordinators will, with the support of the network and the network's coordinator, organize regional meetings at which training in the various regions will be discussed.

6. Regional coordinators are to be selected by the regions every three years.

7. The International Coordinator will facilitate the exchange of information and encourage coordination of efforts between regional networks and link these with ICAE.

8. The coordinators, meeting together from time to time, are responsible for the overall policy and development of the network.

9. The International Coordinator is appointed for a period of two years, as of 03 October 1986.

Accreditation

Because of the interest generated on the issue of accreditation, the members attending the first meeting of the Network for Participatory FORMATION of Adult Educators prepared the following statement:

> The concern of the Network for Participatory FORMATION of Adult Educators is with the delivery of quality training programs for the development of adult educators.
>
> We recognize the diversity within and between regions of different types of adult educators, e.g. in the Caribbean, accreditation is important for employment and economic purposes, whereas in Latin America accreditation means obtaining social legitimacy and international support for local popular education training experiences.
>
> After careful consideration of previous discussions on the subject of training and accreditation, it was concluded that ICAE could best serve the development of diverse programs of high quality by helping regional associations in their efforts to gain legitimacy, validation and accreditation for local, national and regional programs.
>
> One form of support from ICAE to regional associations should be in the assessment of training programs, especially as they relate to local objectives.
>
> Together with these associations, ICAE could develop a strategy for accreditation that meets local needs.

Epilogue

The group that met in Nairobi laid out the parameters within which the new Network will function, identified the scope of work and the specific tasks it will attempt to undertake. The Executive Committee of ICAE endorsed the work of this group, formally recognized the Network, and pledged the Council's support.

The Network has accepted the challenge and has indicated a willingness to undertake the mammoth task of attempting to address the issue of training of adult educators in all regions of the world. This issue is a very complex one; it raises many questions, and is often characterized by many unresolved difficulties. Those of us who met in Nairobi recognized that the way ahead will neither be always clear or easy. What was clear, however, was that the Nairobi Meeting was yet another phase in an on-going process of searching and dialogue, and of creating and building, which must continue at different levels and between various actors within each region.

In terms of what the Network is able to accomplish, it is well to remind ourselves, our various regional organizations, and the Council, that this will depend on several important factors.

- First, the support and cooperation of member associations is critical. There must be a great deal of interaction and collaboration between the regional coordinators and their regional organizations, since the focus of the Network is to be on what happens 'on the ground' in each regions.

- Secondly, for the Network to operate and function effectively, it must have access to financial and material resources. Money for coordination and operational costs is crucial; without this the Network will not be able to seriously tackle the tasks set out for it. Obtaining funds for specific program activities is also important: exchange visits, research, preparation and dissemination of directories, etc. ICAE and the Network coordinators will have to develop strategies to address the issue of funding.

Our spirits were high as we left Nairobi. We were excited about having met the challenge and conscious of having created something new. Our enthusisam for what we created and our commitment to making it work was real. Each of us pledged to carry 'the spirit of Nairobi' back to our regions and to attempt to infuse it into our various associations, so that with renewed energy we could work towards providing the type and quality of training for adult educators that would help us all to realize our vision of a more just and humane world.

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NETWORK FOR THE PARTICIPATORY "FORMATION" OF ADULT EDUCATORS

REPORT ON THE FIRST MEETING OF THE ICAE TRAINING NETWORK

Nairobi, September 29 - October 3, 1986

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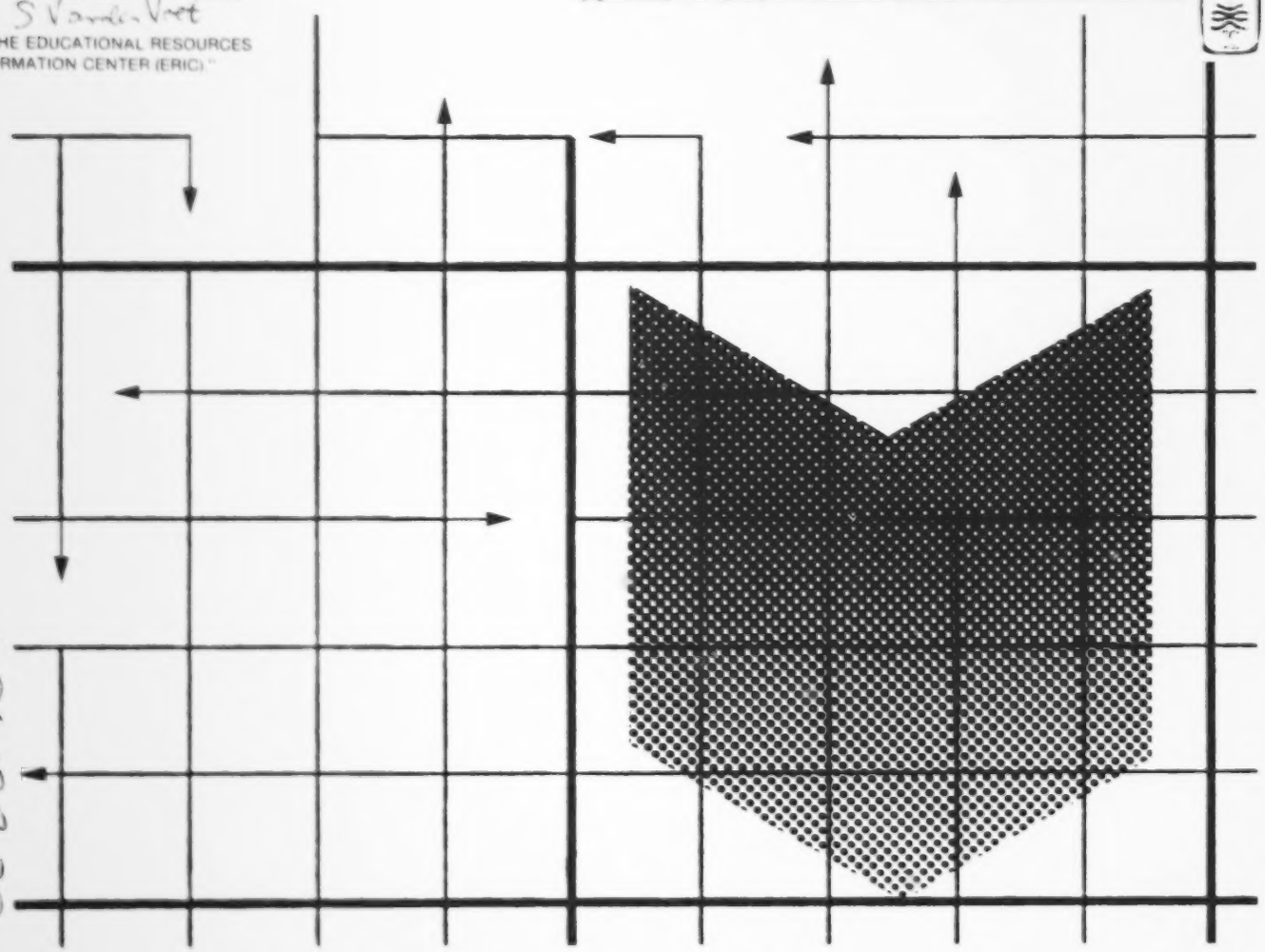

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Participants

AFRICA

Fatim Ndiaye
RADI, Gibraltor 11, No. 282
BP 12085
Dakar, Senegal

Juma Nyirenda
Centre for Continuing Education
University of Zambia
PO Box 50516
Lusaka, Zambia

Paul Wangoola
African Association for Literacy & Adult Education
P O Box 50768
Nairobi, Kenya

ASIA AND SOUTH PACIFIC

Om Shrivastava
109 Kharol Colony
Old Fatehpura
Udaipur 313001
Rajasthan, India

Akanisi Lewaravu
School of Humanities
University of the South Pacific
PO Box 1168
Suva, Fiji

CARIBBEAN

Pat Ellis
Caribbean Regional Council for Adult Education
c/o Extra Mural Studies Unit
University of the West Indies
Pinelands, Saint Michael
Barbados, West Indies

EUROPE

Chris Duke
Chairman, Department of Continuing Education
University of Warwick, Westwood
Coventry CV4 7AL, England

LATIN AMERICA

Jorge Osorio
Consejo de Educacion de Adultos de America Latina
Casilla 6257, Correo 22
Santiago, Chile

NORTH AMERICA

Phyllis Cunningham
Adult Continuing Education
Gable Hall
Northern Illinois University
Dekalb, Illinois 60115, USA

ICAE

Evelyn Murialdo
Network Support Coordinator
International Council for Adult Education
720 Bathurst Street, Suite 500
Toronto, Ontario
M5S 2R4

TRANSLATORS

Jane Muasya
PO Box 48328
Nairobi, Kenya

Salome Rwilitiza
c/o PO Box 14206
Nairobi, Kenya